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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

UNCLE SAM AT YOUR SERVICE Monday, September 16, 1929

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SPEAKING TIME: 10 Minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Station _____ presents today a new weekly feature for every radio listener, no matter where he lives, no matter what he does for a living. This feature is called UNCLE SAM AT YOUR SERVICE and is prepared by specialists in the Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration of the United States Department of Agriculture. Beginning today, at this time each Monday, the Food and Drugs Inspector will take you on a personally conducted tour through the offices, laboratories, and field stations where the scientists and administrators do their work of safeguarding the nation's food and drugs supply under the provisions of the Federal law. Today, the Inspector is going to tell you how the Food and Drugs Act came about and recall something of the state of affairs before the Act was passed. We take pleasure, then, in introducing to you the Inspector ---

---ooOoo---

My occupation has made me a good listener. Whether it has also made me a good talker--- you'll have to judge for yourself.

As for the "listener" part, you have to be pretty good to sit through a long session with a man who is trying to explain why he adulterated the milk he sold with water, burnt sugar, and a yellow dye to make it look rich. In my 22 years as a food and drugs inspector, I have heard that story many times. I have heard other stories equally interesting. I have been in the laboratories, in the field, in the manufacturing plants where foods are made, analyzed talked about. I have spent a lot of time in the markets where foods are sold. I tell you this simply because I'd like to give you a general idea of what it means to safeguard the nation's food supply--- as the announcer said--- before I tell you how we do it.

A lot of water has run under the bridge since I first got into this work of helping to make foods and drugs safe for the consumer. I always liked to work with things, to study them. I guess I have an investigational mind. Anyhow, I get a lot of pleasure out of associating with chemists, bacteriologists, scientists--- men working in field and laboratory.

Be patient--- I am not going to keep on with these personal reminiscences much longer. But I do want to mention one more case.

The Federal Food and Drugs Act was passed in 1906. You probably speak of this Act as the "pure food law." Anyhow, before it was passed, it was a common practice to adulterate foods and drugs. Those were the days of swamp-root cures, so-called patent medicines, Indian herbs, and all that sort of thing. Some of these preparations were "guaranteed," as they said, to cure

almost anything from fierce, shooting pains to homesickness. Some of them had some value--- some were simply colored water or bread pills.

Adulterated foods were just as common. At that time, a friend of mine who was the Wisconsin State Chemist, told me that one day when pure food laws were being considered in Wisconsin, he was called to the plant of a large candy manufacturer. The owner of the plant told him that he had been reading a good deal about the use of poisonous substances in candy and, while he felt sure that there was nothing harmful or unhealthful going into HIS candies, he wanted the chemist's opinion on the matter. He wanted the chemist to go through his factory from top to bottom and see that all the raw materials were harmless. It was a big plant and it took some time to make a complete survey. It was worth while, though, as the chemist found the firm had unknowingly been using a substance sold to them as a coloring matter which was a poisonous lead compound. The candy maker was aghast and immediately ordered the stuff dumped.

That's one case. The candy maker was innocent of any intention to harm or defraud the public. Other manufacturers weren't so conscientious. Some of them adulterated bread, for example, with harmful chemicals. Others added water and chemical preservatives to canned goods. Cocoa and chocolate were found to contain oxide of iron and other coloring matter, foreign fats, flour and starch. Even after the Act was passed, one firm was found gathering up dead horses and making them into "canned beef" for sale.

I could go on for a long time telling you about adulterations practiced before the Food and Drugs Act was passed. But this brief statement should give you an idea of conditions as they were back there more than a quarter century ago.

The administration of the Food and Drugs Act is not the only thing with which the Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration of the Department of Agriculture is charged. We have the responsibility of enforcing 5 other laws of importance to the public. They are the Tea Act, the Import Milk Act, the Insecticide Act, the Caustic Poison Act, and the Naval Stores Act. There is plenty to say about each of these acts. And, in later talks, we'll consider them. But today, and in talks to follow, we want to consider only the Food and Drugs Act.

I was telling you about conditions before the pure food law was passed. I was telling you how some foods were adulterated. But as soon as the Act became effective, many of these conditions were corrected at once. Others took investigations of the most difficult sort before a violation of the law could be proved. There are two ways of getting evidence. First, the inspection of plants by inspectors trained to ferret out violations. That's where I and my colleagues have come in, mainly, in the past 22 years. Second, the laboratory examination of actual shipments of foods and drugs. In these examinations, we make use of the latest research methods in chemistry, bacteriology, and related sciences.

My co-workers in the Administration say that if evidence is to be effective, it must be borne out by analysis of the particular inter-State shipments against which legal action is planned. This work progressed very slowly at first inasmuch as methods of analysis had to be worked out and their accuracy tested and established. Even today, when a new form of adulteration is found, it takes a lot of skill on the part of our experts to establish methods of proving that adulteration beyond a doubt.

The adulterator, you see, is always one jump ahead of the laboratory man. Take the case of tomatoes, for example. Years ago, it was a common practice in the manufacture of tomato ketchup to use the tomatoes, after a sketchy washing, just as they came in from the field. Now any of you who have grown tomatoes know that in most seasons tomatoes are very often cracked, rotten or dirty as they come from the field. Well, it wasn't difficult to get manufacturers to wash the tomatoes properly, but it was something else again to prevent them from using bad quality or even decayed tomatoes. In making ketchup, the tomatoes are run through a machine called a CYCLONE and that's a very apt description of what the machine does to tomatoes. While the machine was reducing the tomatoes to a pulp, any decayed material was so completely mixed with the other material that it was very hard to detect the presence of objectionable matter. This problem was solved in a very satisfactory manner by the scientific research work of B. J. Howard of this Administration. He found that by examining the ketchup under a microscope, the fine mold filaments which are present in the rotten material, could not only be detected but could be estimated to a very close figure.

But that's getting ahead of our story. There has been a great deal of interesting work done on tomato products which I am going to tell you about next Monday.

All this indicates that we are moving along. Twenty-two years of the Food and Drugs Act have produced a food supply in the United States which is amazingly free from adulteration and misbranding. To get this result, it has been necessary to bring legal action in more than 16 thousand cases. Such serious violations as I mentioned in the early part of this talk are seldom found. Honest manufacturers--- and most of them are honest--- have had plenty of chance to develop the quality and purity of their wares without the competition with dishonest products which would drive honest makers out of business. Twenty-five years ago, the labels on foods were to be mistrusted. Now they nearly always tell the truth. But if it wasn't for the fact that we always have a small percentage of dishonest men with us, I would be out of a job.

I have mentioned particular kinds of flagrant adulteration today because it may give you a glimpse of the reasons back of the enforcement of the Federal Food and Drugs Act. You seldom read about this work in your daily papers. But you may rest assured that the 300 chemists, inspectors, bacteriologists, physicians, veterinarians, and other specialists on the firing line are carefully watching your food and drug supplies to protect both your health and your pocketbook.

---ooOoo---

ANNOUNCEMENT: You have just heard the Inspector's first pure food and drugs talk in the UNCLE SAM AT YOUR SERVICE feature presented by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and Station_____. Next Monday he will talk about canned tomatoes. You are invited to tune in and hear him.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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UNCLE SAM AT YOUR SERVICE

Monday, September 23, 1929.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SPEAKING TIME: 10 Minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENT: When you go to a store and buy canned tomatoes, ketchup, or other tomato products, you feel pretty sure that you're getting what you're paying for --- THESE days. But it hasn't ALWAYS been this way. And that's what the Veteran Inspector is going to talk about today. His tomato talk comes as this week's UNCLE SAM AT YOUR SERVICE radio program, prepared for broadcast by Station _____ by specialists in the Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration of the United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

I've always had a weakness for tomatoes. Ever since I could remember. When I was a boy I was usually the first one to visit the patch when the big fruits were ripening on the vines. I'd pick a fine, smooth one--- moisten a spot with my tongue--- shake on some salt, and--- Oh, boy! The days of real sport.

We would slice those tomatoes and eat them three meals a day. We'd eat them as long as they lasted and, when the season was over, we carried on with canned tomatoes, catsup, chili sauce, and other canned tomato products. Try some right good catsup with pork and beans--- with fish--- with steak! We even used to spread it on bread and butter once in a while.

No--- I'm not in the pay of the tomato canning companies. I'm just one of those Americans who helps to consume that million-ton tomato crop this country produces every year. I'm doing my share. I like tomatoes and I don't mind putting in a good word for them now and then.

You see, I know both sides of the story. I've seen quite a few BAD tomatoes in my day and I'm going to tell you about THOSE in a couple of minutes. But right now I want to mention that the tomato was introduced in Europe from South America away back in the 16th century. For nearly 300 years, people thought the fruit was poisonous and it took quite a while for folks to get over that idea. As a matter of fact, it wasn't until about the middle of the last century that we began to use tomatoes for food. Today, they rank among the most popular vegetables we have.

They tell me that before the Food and Drugs Act was passed--- in 1906--- there wasn't much demand for commercially-canned tomatoes. I don't know whether this was because the consumer was on his guard against the product or whether he just hadn't been made tomato-conscious, as the salesmen say. Anyhow, those were the days when you still heard the old warning, LET THE BUYER BEWARE, and I happen to know that plenty of tomatoes canned in those early days weren't worth eating.

I happen to know that because I was a Federal pure foods inspector and I saw some of those tomatoes canned and made into catsup. As an example, listen

to this story of an experience of mine. It happened several years ago.

I had spent most of the day visiting factories and canning plants. I found things generally satisfactory. Most of the canners were doing a good, clean job--- using fresh, clean tomatoes--- and preparing the product according to regulations and labeling it correctly.

But along about quitting time, I visited a plant where things weren't so good. They were canning tomatoes and the manager explained that his supplies weren't keeping up with his orders. Well, he didn't want to lose any business, so he was stretching the pack. That is, he was adding a bucket of water to each three or four buckets of tomatoes. He was stretching the pack so far that some of those cans contained only one or two TOMATOES and the rest water.

Well, I explained that I was a Government inspector and that his methods were illegal under the law. He showed some knowledge of the food and drugs act and said that he wasn't going to ship those tomatoes out of that State. Inasmuch as the Federal law contains a provision prohibiting adulterated or misbranded foods and drugs from being shipped from State to State, he thought he had me. But I called in the STATE inspector. He looked over the factory and embargoed the whole stock. That was mighty good cooperation. He and the canner finally reached an agreement. The canner was to be allowed to sell his WATERED tomatoes in that State only if they were PLAINLY labeled WATERED.

I've been in this food and drugs inspection work for more than 20 years and I know that when the first inspections of tomato canneries were made, conditions which today seem almost UNBELIEVABLY bad were brought to light. You may remember that I mentioned this in my talk last week as an example of the changing conditions in the food industry which the food and drugs act has helped to bring about. Catsup made from dirty or decayed tomatoes is a rarity today -- but it wasn't so rare 20 years ago.

Tomatoes as they are grown often contain cracks and rotten spots. Frequently, they have soil sticking to their skins. Well, in the old days, these tomatoes were dumped into small tanks where the water was changed only once or twice a day in some factories. The tomatoes were taken directly from these tanks and peeled and canned. Sometimes the skins were improperly peeled off so that the canned tomatoes contained some of this skin. Often only parts of the cores were removed -- and then so much water was added that the resulting mixture might have as few as 1-1/2 tomatoes in an ordinary Number 2-1/2 can. And SOME canners took the skins, cores and trimmings that were rejected and ran them, rot and all, through a cyclone machine and reduced them to pulp which was used for catsup and similar products.

One day, a good many years ago, I arrived at a cannery in the middle of the afternoon and found the men busy unloading a car of tomatoes. The condition of the fruit was terrible. The product was soft, crushed, and partly decayed. The manager said that he was very disappointed in these tomatoes. He had intended to put them up in cans as WHOLE tomatoes. But since none of them seemed to be whole, he was going to add spices and vinegar and make them into catsup. He thought the spices would cover up the fact that the tomatoes were partly decayed. It was a common practice in those days to add BENZOATE OF SODA to prevent further spoilage. This chemical is seldom used today in tomato products--- and when it IS, it must go down on the label. Benzoate of Soda is used as a preservative,

you understand. In those days, too, they often packed the product in barrels or casks rather than in the clean, sanitary, hermetically-sealed and processed packages which are in use today. Well, this particular canner finally decided to dump the tomatoes. He reached this laudable decision when the inspector pointed out that he was liable under the food and drugs act if he packed such offensive stuff.

Do not get the idea that it was an easy job correcting these bad practices. It took time. It took time to work out in the laboratories ways of detecting adulteration in foods that were shipped from State to State. Inspectors and scientific men were sent into the field to help the industry solve this problem. The first step was an announcement that the addition of water to canned tomatoes and tomato products wouldn't be tolerated. If products were found to contain ADDED water, action would be made to remove them from the market wherever they were found in the channels of interstate commerce. This announcement had to be backed up. Even when an inspector testified that he had actually SEEN a canner adding water to his tomatoes, that wasn't evidence enough. A chemist engaged in the enforcement of the Federal food and drugs act worked out a method of determining the NORMAL composition of tomato juice. That helped. After this method--which tests by refracted light passing through tomato juice--- was put into use, it wasn't long before canners stopped watering their tomatoes. At the same time, pure food and drug inspectors were busy visiting all the canneries and suggesting to their managers that they insist on a COMPLETE removal of the skin and core so as to get better merchandise.

In brief, here's what the inspectors recommended to canners: They urged a rigid inspection of all tomatoes as they came in from the field. They recommended that the tomatoes be washed carefully in constantly changing water. Then, they should be run over long revolving belts where women sorters sat on each side and took out any fruits not fit for food. They recommended that every piece of apparatus in the factory which comes in contact with the food be made of material which could be cleaned easily. They discouraged the use of ARTIFICIAL PRESERVATIVES and COLOR in the product and recommended that the containers in which the tomatoes were sold be clean and such as could be properly processed. They presented to the industry an excellent system by which the finished product could be analyzed by the use of the microscope and even the SMALLEST percentage of decomposed material detected. The industry gave excellent cooperation and today we find on the market canned tomatoes, catsup, pulp, puree and similar products which even a Government inspector will use in his own home. The American buyer of today can be pretty sure that his canned and bottled tomatoes are just exactly as they are represented on the label. Canned tomatoes can not be shipped in interstate commerce if they are watered. In case cores, skins, and other by-products of the fruit are used in the various canned tomato products, that fact, too, must be clearly stated on the label. Catsup and chile sauce now contain no benzoate of soda, save in rare cases and even then the label must state how much is contained in the product. Tomato sauce is labeled sauce or "Salsa de pomidoro." Whole tomatoes are labeled whole tomatoes. All of these products must be made from clean and wholesome material. All the buyer has to do is read the label and then select what he wants. That's my tip to the tomato buyer.

As you would expect, this constant improvement in the quality of tomato products has brought about a very substantial growth in the tomato industry. The size of that industry has increased over 100 per cent in the last 22 years. The

American public is eating more tomatoes and better tomatoes. They're wholesome and a mighty good food.

--ooOoo--

ANNOUNCEMENT : You have just heard the Veteran Inspector tell about what is being done to safeguard and stimulate the public's tomato appetite. Next Monday he will tell you how the Government's pure food and drugs men protect the Nation's imported food supply. His talk will come as the UNCLE SAM AT YOUR SERVICE program which Station_____ broadcasts each Monday in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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UNCLE SAM AT YOUR SERVICE

Monday, September 30, 1929.

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SPEAKING TIME: 10 Minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENT: The Veteran Inspector is with us again to tell you the story of how Uncle Sam's food and drugs specialists safeguard the American imported food and drugs supply. He takes you to New York. He takes you out into the field. He speaks of ships and things from foreign ports. His talk comes as this week's "UNCLE SAM AT YOUR SERVICE" radio program prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture and broadcast in cooperation with Station _____.

All right, Inspector.

---ooOoo---

In a huge, square block of a building--- high above the sidewalks of New York--- there's a long row of offices, laboratories, and sample rooms where trained men and women work busily all day at their job of protecting the American consumer from misbranded, adulterated, spoiled, or harmful foods and drugs.

Look out of the windows. You'll see the turbulent, towering city spreading out in colored blocks and towers almost as far as your eyes can reach. You'll see the rivers, the graceful bridges, Brooklyn, sprawling over the flat land across the river. You'll see the busy warehouse district, the noisy and colorful markets, the streets. Turn toward the sea and you'll catch the blue-green of water and sky--- you'll see the docks and the ships--- the flags of a hundred foreign lands. And you'll hear the roar, the hum, the cries of streets --- the voice of one of the greatest and busiest cities in the world.

You'll find it hard--- visiting these offices of the Eastern District, Field Inspection Service of the Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration--- to keep away from the windows. For these sky-line rooms actually look out over the port of New York where the great bulk of food imported for America's use is received. And it won't be long before you'll feel that here are men working with their huge field right under their noses.

It's a big field these Food and Drugs men cover and New York is only one small corner of it. The field is as wide as the Nation--- in a way, as wide as the world. There are 19 laboratories or stations located in strategic cities of the United States. For administrative efficiency, the whole country is divided into 3 districts: the Eastern, with headquarters at New York--- the Central, headquarters at Chicago--- and the Western, with San Francisco as the headquarters city. The head office of the Administration

is in Washington. Two hundred and seventy trained scientists and many non-scientific workers are engaged in enforcing the Federal Pure Food and Drugs Act in these cities.

So much for a bird's-eye view of the field. Now let's talk about the work. Only one side of the work, today--- what is known as IMPORT CONTROL work.

You know, this country produces a great deal of the food we eat--- but by no means ALL of it. Take FIGS, for example. We raise some figs, but also import large quantities of them from Turkey and other Mediterranean countries. Well, some of these imported figs are wormy. During the shipping season of 1927-1928, Federal inspectors examined nearly 20 million pounds of imported figs. More than 10 million pounds were found to be wormy and weren't allowed to come into the country.

Take COCOA BEANS, from which chocolate and cocoa are made. If you would go with a Food and Drugs inspector when he makes his rounds of the docks, you would probably see him poke a long metal tryer into the big bags of beans fresh from the ships, take samples of the cocoa beans, break them open, and check them for worminess and moldiness. Last year, for instance, inspectors examined one and one-third million bags and found 10 thousand bags wormy or moldy. These defective cocoa beans were not allowed to come into the country.

Take canned foods. We import large quantities of canned foods from such countries as Italy, France, Belgium, Spain, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland. England supplies us with some of our preserves. Well, shipments of such products must pass close inspection before they are allowed to enter the commerce of this country, before they reach our tables. Products which are unfit, unwholesome, impure, falsely labeled--- although they often TRY to get in--- rarely succeed in passing the vigilance of inspections and chemical tests applied. Detection and rejection are almost a certainty. During the last year of which we now have record, more than 5 thousand cases of canned fish and nearly 7 thousand cases of canned vegetables were refused entrance at American ports.

Spices come to the United States from the four corners of the earth. Crude drugs reach our ports in ships that bear flags of all lands, or very nearly so. Dates found on sale at American markets come largely from Mesopotamia--- which is in Asia--- although we must remember that we now raise dates in the United States. Olive oil comes to us from Greece, Italy or other countries. Oh, there are scores of foods and food products which the taste of the American public demands and if we cannot raise them here, we buy them and import them. But all of them--- no matter what they are, no matter where they come from--- must undergo strict examination by inspectors and chemists. And if they are found adulterated, misbranded, defective in any way under the Food and Drugs law, they are immediately outlawed and refused entry to this country. The products are then ordered dumped, exported, or, if it is possible, corrected to comply with the law.

The Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration maintains chemical laboratories and corps of inspectors and chemists at all of the principal ports

of entry to the United States. These men make the tests of purity. The heads of the laboratories, or stations, are given the authority to take the necessary action to exclude from the United States all such products as are in violation of the Food and Drugs Act. It is for this reason that you can be sure that the foods and drugs reaching your home from foreign countries are pure and unadulterated.

All of this is more or less an old story to me. I have been in this inspection business for 23 years. I have visited the docks, the markets, the warehouses, the factories. I have worked in the offices, on the papers and the records. I wish I had a quarter for each of the items I have inspected. And I have seen some interesting sights--- had some thrilling experiences. I once opened a bag of beans and found inside, carefully hidden in the center of the sack, a small box of rare wood packed with opium. The opium was worth thousands of dollars. That case was turned over to the men who enforce the Narcotics Act. It's an old story to me, I say, but it may be quite new to you.

For example, many people ask me just what this Food and Drugs law is. Briefly, it is a general law that applies to all foods, drinks, confectionary, condiments, drugs, and medicines. The law has jurisdiction over all these articles only if they are IMPORTED or shipped from one State to another or are manufactured or sold locally in the District of Columbia and the territories. It also has jurisdiction over articles that are exported. The law can not be applied to articles which are made and sold within the boundaries of a given State--- but if those articles go across the boundaries of that State, they come under the jurisdiction of the law. The law prohibits the importation of the shipping from one State to another of any food or drug that is adulterated or misbranded. It then states that a food is adulterated if it is entirely or partly filthy or decayed--- or if it contains any added harmful substance which may be bad for the health--- or if any valuable part of it has been taken out--- or if any substance has been substituted in whole or in part for the food or drug--- or if anything has been mixed with the food or drug--- so as to lower its quality or strength--- or if it is colored in a manner to conceal any inferiority or damage. The law states that a food or drug is MISBRANDED if the package in which it is contained, or the label, contains any statement or picture which is false or misleading in any particular--- or if it is falsely labeled as to the country or State in which it was produced--- or if it is an imitation and is sold under the name of the genuine article --- or if the food or drug is so labeled that it will deceive or mislead the purchaser. The law requires that all packaged food must bear a clear and true statement of its net content, either by weight, measure, or count. Drugs must have a statement on the label as to the percentage of narcotics present in them. If they are sold under recognized standards, they must come up to those standards. Furthermore, they must be truthfully and clearly labeled.

So you'll see that the Food and Drugs law is designed to safeguard the consumer's health and pocketbook. The law is rigidly enforced. Many violations are found, but the number of violations is small when you take into account the total mass of foods and drugs honestly made and honestly sold. From

my experience, I have found that most of the vast volume of food products shipped from State to State and imported into this country is wholesome and truthfully labeled. That is the experience of the entire corps of workers in the Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration.

But how do the foreigners who ship food to us, who produce it for us, look at this thing? That's a natural question, and the answer isn't hard. I think one quotation from a report from the New York station will give you a general idea of the foreigners' viewpoint. An exporter of figs from Turkey, when visiting the United States, told one of the Administration's fig experts: "The best quality of figs are selected for United States delivery. We must send you the best of our crops, because you will not accept our poorer qualities."

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ANNOUNCEMENT: That concludes the Veteran Inspector's talk for today, broadcast by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in cooperation with Station_____. Next Monday, he will tell you what the Department does to assure the public of a fresh, sound egg supply.

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